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United for Quality Care

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Kyanna Ricketts, PCA
Manchester
District 1199 New England
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Kyanna Ricketts and I am a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) living in Manchester. I have been working for 13 years as a PCA and I love the work I do. I provide mobile assistance, ADL's, run errands, grocery shopping, help during medical appointments, and lots of other things.

I love taking care of other people. Caregiving is my calling and one day I would like to become a nurse. While I am proud of what I do, it's so frustrating being called an essential, frontline worker when we are paid like we are expendable. Throughout the pandemic, PCAs like myself were called heroes, yet we can't get the state to lift a finger to give us wages we can survive on and benefits that allow us to save for our futures. Is that how Connecticut treats heroes? Is that what heroes deserve?

Recently, I've been sick – thankfully I tested negative for COVID, but the cough and the fatigue have stuck around. I don't have paid time off, and I worry about what will happen if I get sick and have to go without pay. I can't afford to take any time off.

I take the bus to get to work, but I hate taking the bus. Being punctual is important to me, and on the bus someone else has control whether you're on time or late. I want to get my drivers' license, but since every penny goes to pay my bills, I don't know how I'll save up the \$120 I need to take the test and get my license.

Right now I don't receive paid time off so there are times I can't go to the doctors for check ups because I have to work. I only get part time hours because if I make too much I lose my health benefits from the state. It hurts to be told I make too much money to qualify for food stamps but then can't afford food because Allied hasn't paid me on time, but I will spare you and not tell you how I really feel about Allied.

I can imagine a future where maybe working one job is enough, where we don't have to worry that our electricity will get shut off if we get sick, and where we can save up the money we need to make our lives better with the basics: transportation, healthcare, staying home when we're sick.

Please do the right thing and fully fund home care services. Thank you for your time.